



**NIWOT HIGH SCHOOL**  
INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE FOCUS

ST. VRAIN VALLEY SCHOOLS  
*academic excellence by design*



# Niwot High School IB DP Language Policy



## Language Policy Steering Committee

Assistant Principal of Instruction, International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme Coordinator, Group 2 (World Language) Representative, Group 1 (English) Representative, and Parent Representative

## Niwot High School

### Mission Statement

Niwot High School is accountable for providing:

- A safe and positive learning environment
- A challenging academic program that promotes both inquiry and reflection
- Activities that promote discovery and respect of diverse interests and abilities
- Opportunities for critical thinking, collaboration, and open communication within the school community
- A global perspective of our world and its cultures
- An atmosphere of respect, trust and integrity
- Opportunities for students to demonstrate responsibility

### Vision Statement

Niwot High School provides educational experiences that inspire academic excellence, personal growth and social responsibility.

## International Baccalaureate Mission

The International Baccalaureate® aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

## School Language Philosophy

Niwot High School recognizes that language is fundamental to all learning at all academic levels. Throughout our curriculum (IB and Traditional), our staff fosters the development of the language of instruction, world languages and the mother tongue. Every teacher at Niwot High School is a language teacher and recognizes the importance of this role through student contact every day. By integrating language into every aspect of the curriculum, we are teaching students the importance of culture, diversity, and sensitivity toward others which in turn enhances their personal growth, cognitive development, and facilitates international understanding. Through the strong emphasis on language, our goal is to foster a deep understanding about language and master effective communication.

### **At Niwot High School it is understood that:**

- All teachers are language teachers.
- Language is a primary means of communicating and learning.
- The acquisition of language is a lifelong process and is a central component of intellectual and personal growth.
- Proficiency earned in one language may be transferable to other languages, and language proficiency aids the student in acquiring competencies in other curricular areas.
- Language is an expression of culture and must be valued as an integral part of a student's identity.
- The development of the mother-tongue language is critical for maintaining one's cultural identity.
- Language learning promotes internationalism and multicultural understanding.
- Language learning must be fostered in all aspects of the school community.
- Teachers must strive to recognize the language needs of all students and work to serve these needs within and outside of the classroom.
- Equity of access to IB courses is a fundamental right of all qualified students.

### **At Niwot High School, our language programs aim to:**

- Enable students to learn and use language effectively, appropriately, accurately and confidently.
- Develop students' powers of oral and written communication.
- Enable students to develop and use language skills in a variety of contexts and purposes.
- Promote the appreciation, understanding and analysis of literature.
- Encourage students to explore language as a means to understand the differing perspectives of people from other cultures.
- Develop students' awareness of the role of language in other areas of the curriculum and to other ways of knowing.

- To provide an opportunity for enjoyment, creativity, and intellectual stimulation through knowledge of language and literature.

## Niwot High School Language Profile

Students at Niwot High School are diverse in their background, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and their native language (mother tongue). A breakdown of current mother tongues spoken (as of the 2016-17 school year), as identified by students when they enroll in our school district is shown below:

Language	Percent of Students	Language	Percent of Students
Amharic	0.40%	Marathi	0.16%
Bosnian	0.08%	Nepali	0.32%
Chinese Mandarin	2.65%	Polish	0.16%
Chinese, Yue	0.08%	Portuguese	0.08%
Danish	0.08%	Russian	0.72%
English	72.41%	Spanish	18.60%
Finnish	0.08%	Swahili	0.08%
French	0.16%	Tagalog	0.16%
German, Standard	0.24%	Tamil	0.32%
Gujarati	0.24%	Telugu	0.24%
Hindi	0.24%	Thai	0.16%
Hmong	0.08%	Ukrainian	0.24%
Japanese	0.48%	Urdu	0.08%
Kannada	0.08%	Vietnamese	0.48%
Khmer, Central	0.40%	Zulu	0.16%
Korean	0.32%		

## **Niwot High School students typically fall into one of the following categories:**

- English background (both parents are fluent in English) with little or no proficiency in a language other than English when starting at Niwot High School.
- English background (both parents are fluent in English) with some proficiency in a language other than English as a result of previously living in another country or studying that language for educational purposes in middle school before starting at Niwot High School
- Multilingual students (one or both parents are fluent in a language other than English) who acquired both English and other language(s) at home, but only demonstrate proficiency in one of the languages (either English or other language(s)). Generally speaking, these students receive English language acquisition support through intervention classes or the co-teaching model.
- Bilingual students (one or both parents are fluent in a language other than English) who have shown proficiency in both English and an other language(s).

## **Niwot High School Language Offerings**

### **Language Offerings Overview**

The language of instruction at Niwot High School is English. The St. Vrain Valley School District (SVVSD) and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) require a minimum of 4 credits of English for graduation. English instruction is provided in grades 9 – 12.

Although many four-year colleges require 2 – 3 years of world language instruction, the SVVSD does not require world language instruction for graduation. Niwot High School offers Spanish instruction in levels 1 – 4 and levels 1 – 4 of French instruction.

### **IB Language Offerings**

English A1 at the Higher Level is the only English option for IB Diploma candidates. There has been no need to provide English A1 at the Standard Level, however if a student transferred into the program and needed to complete English A1 SL, we would be willing to accommodate this need. For examinations in May, 2013 we are teaching English A1: Literature.

Niwot High School provides students with a choice between IB French B Standard Level and IB Spanish B Standard Level. On a case-by-case basis Niwot High School allows students to register for IB French B ab initio or IB Spanish B ab initio. The ab initio courses are only offered if 1) a student has transferred to the school and is unable to finish a high enough leveled course to take the Language B SL examination or 2) a student has put forth a devoted effort throughout his/her high school education, but has continued to struggle through the Language B SL track. Teacher and IB Coordinator approval is required for Language B ab initio.

Niwot High School recognizes that second language instruction generally begins in 8<sup>th</sup> grade in the St. Vrain Valley School District. Being a magnet program, Niwot High School receives students from a large number of public, private, charter and home schools. Niwot's IB Programme allows students to begin their second language (Language B) instruction upon entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade if necessary.

## Support for Mother Tongues

If a student's mother tongue is English, Spanish, or French, then they have the opportunity to engage in high level course work in those languages to support the development of their mother tongue. In the 2016-17 school year, Niwot High School added Mandarin Chinese to the course offerings. For students whose mother tongue is not English, we allow them to take a Group 2 language that is different than their mother tongue while allowing them to further develop their language learning.

Our language of instruction is English, and the St. Vrain Valley School District mandates support for all English Language Learners (ELL) through its Board Policy. Board Policy IHBEA is attached to Niwot High School's Language Policy. Niwot High School provides ELL support through a full-time trained instructor.

The St. Vrain Valley School District adopted the SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) in the 2011-12 school year. The SIOP model was developed to facilitate high quality instruction for English Learners in content area teaching. All educators in the school district have received SIOP training, and are required to incorporate these methods into their classroom teaching.

## Strategies for Support of All Teachers

The four dimensions of teaching as they relate to cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) are outlined in "Language and Learning in the IB" (2011, p. 28). These four dimensions include:

- activating prior knowledge,
- scaffolding learning
- extending language, and
- affirming identity.

These four dimensions are supported through professional development at Niwot High School. While many times these topics are discussed and modeled in the broader context of student engagement and effective instruction, the dimensions are also worth noting within the boundaries of language acquisition and support within the language policy. Continued professional development in these areas will be available to teachers to support language learning for IB Diploma Programme students.

## **Additional Considerations**

Niwot High School IB students are allowed to write their Extended Essay in French or Spanish. Since Spanish is the primary second language or mother-tongue language of some students at the school, this allows some of the IB students to write their Extended Essay in their mother tongue.

Niwot High School recognizes that not all parents speak English at home. Niwot High School utilizes the school district translation services when needed to accommodate the needs of the parents during appointments, conferences and presentations. At times, students also translate for their parents if necessary and appropriate. When necessary, hard copy documents are also translated into Spanish.

Niwot High School has a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) team that meets regularly to assess the needs of students experiencing difficulty in their classes. In addition to academic challenges, this team works to design appropriate language accommodations for ELL and second language students.

The language policy should be reviewed on a yearly basis due to the changing needs of our students and to ensure the policy continues to be an active and vital part of the school. This policy should be placed on our website. As new discoveries are published connected to language acquisition, we must constantly review new findings as we move ahead.

Lastly, we encourage all students to participate in learning a language other than their mother tongue.

## **The Language Policy as a Working Document**

A key component to any effective and well-written policy is a plan for adjusting the policy over time. The language needs of students at Niwot High School have shifted over the past ten years, and we anticipate further shifts in the future.

Every five years, the steering committee will meet to evaluate the language policy and identify any possible areas where change is needed. The steering committee will then collaborate with IB teachers to further explore possible changes. This will be done through a series of collaborative meetings where feedback will be elicited from IB teachers. The steering committee will facilitate these meetings.

The language policy will be published via the school website along with the contact info for members of the steering committee.

## **St. Vrain Valley School District Policy Regarding English Language Learners:**

File: IHBEA

### **English Language Learners**

In keeping with the intention of the state of Colorado and this school district to offer educational opportunities to those students with limited English proficiency, the district shall provide suitable research-based language instructional programs for all identified English language learners in grades kindergarten through 12 in accordance with the requirements of state and federal statutes, Colorado State Board of Education rules, and Colorado Department of Education guidance. The district shall identify students as English language learners using the state approved assessment for English language. Identified students shall be assessed annually to determine their level of proficiency in the English language. The district shall certify to the Colorado Department of Education each year those students identified as English language learners who are eligible for funding pursuant to the English Language Proficiency Act. The district shall provide additional information as required by the Colorado Department of Education to comply with federal law.

Adopted: September 21, 1983

Revised: February 8, 1984

Revised: June 8, 1994

Revised: November 9, 2005

Revised: October 28, 2015

#### **LEGAL REFS.:**

20 U.S.C. 1703 (f) (denial of equal educational opportunity prohibited)

20 U.S.C. 6801 et seq. (language instruction for limited English proficient and immigrant students contained in No Child Left Behind Act of 2001)

42 U.S.C. 2000d (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964)

C.R.S. 22-24-101 (English Language Proficiency Act) 1

CCR 301-10 et seq. (State Board of Education rules for the Administration of the English Language Proficiency Act)

St. Vrain Valley School District RE-1J, Longmont, Colorado

Last revised 2016-2017 academic school year